

the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, at 9:45 a.m., in room SD366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. At this hearing, the committee will hear testimony regarding the President's fiscal year 2009 budget request for the Department of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, at 10 a.m. in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to hear testimony on "Selling to Seniors: The Need for Accountability and Oversight of Marketing and Sales by Medicare Private Plans, Part Two."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, at 10 a.m. in order to hold a hearing on the President's foreign affairs budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. in order to hold a committee coffee with His Excellency Salam Fayyad, Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, at 10 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled "The Defense Department's Homeland Security Role: How the Military Can and Should Contribute."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, in order to conduct a hearing entitled "Examining the State Secrets Privilege: Protecting National Security While Preserving Accountability" on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, at 10 a.m. in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Witness list

Carl Nichols, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of

Justice, Civil Division, Washington, DC; The Honorable Patricia M. Wald, Former Chief Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, Washington, DC; Louis Fisher, Specialist in Constitutional Law, Law Library of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Robert M. Chesney, Associate Professor, Wake Forest University School of Law, Winston-Salem, NC; and Michael Vatis, Partner, Steptoe & Johnson LLP, New York, NY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 13, in order to conduct a hearing on the FY 2009 Budget for Veterans Programs. The Committee will meet in room 418 of the Russell Senate Office Building, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 13, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. in order to hold a closed business meeting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet on Wednesday, February 13, 2008 from 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. in Dirksen 628 for the purpose of conducting a hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, Subcommittee on Children and Families, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, in order to conduct a hearing on the Family and Medical Leave Act on Wednesday, February 13, 2008. The hearing will commence at 3 p.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. BOND. Madam President, first, I ask unanimous consent that Senator McCain's legislative fellow, Navy Commander Scott Butler, be granted floor privileges during the second session of the 110th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2008

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5270, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5270) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I rise today to support a short-term extension of the Federal Aviation Administration's contract authority and its collection and expenditure authority through to June 30, 2008. Because of the urgent need to extend the current aviation taxes and related budget provisions, I am supporting this legislation.

But I am becoming convinced that Congress cannot pass S. 1300, the Aviation Investment and Modernization Act, authored by then-Senator Lott and myself. I believe that Congress should pass a long-term extension of the existing aviation taxes in order to give the FAA the funding stability it needs while Congress moves forward with a comprehensive review of how the agency is funded. I cannot support the current funding regime, as it will not provide the agency with the resources it needs to build the Next Generation Air Traffic Control System. In lieu of a long-term extension, I would have preferred an extension until the end of this fiscal year, September 30, 2008, as it would have given the FAA and our Nation's airports a greater degree of reassurance that they will receive the full \$3.5 billion in airport funding that Congress approved last year.

The short-term extension before us today is not only crucial to the ongoing functioning of the FAA, it is necessary because without it the agency faces a potential crisis. Without adopting this legislation, the FAA would not be able to pay 4,000 employees after February 29, 2008. And that is an unacceptable action. The last thing the agency needs right now is to endure a potentially debilitating staffing crisis. To preserve these jobs this short-term extension must be passed today.

This country's aviation system is the safest in the world. However, in remaining vigilant to maintain this standard we must ensure the FAA has the resources to continue its efforts in modernizing our air traffic control system and in updating the more antiquated parts of our aviation infrastructure. The passing of this extension today will allow these vital investments to continue.

I look forward to working with my friend and distinguished colleague, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, and members of the Senate's Finance and